

California Agency Watershed Management Strategic Plan

Draft Strategic Plan Elements

9 May 2003

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Introduction

■ Background

- In April 2002, the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) and California Resources Agency published a Report to the Legislature, Addressing the Need to Protect California's Watersheds: Working with Local Partnerships as required by AB2117. This report identified issues local watershed partnerships have when trying to work with or receive services from the State. In order to address these issues, the Cal/EPA and Resources Agency are partnering to develop the California Agency Watershed Management Strategic Plan.

■ Purpose

- Based on the findings of the AB2117 Report, State Agency Directors asked representative Department Deputy Director's to come together and initiate the development of the Strategic Plan (see Appendix A for list of Steering Committee members). It is hoped that this cross-Agency planning process will initiate changes required to address the issues identified during interviews with local stakeholders during the preparation of the AB2117 Report. This planning process is focused on breaking down the silos (compartmentalized programs) within and across State Agencies that inhibit the most effective and efficient delivery of services to local watershed stakeholders. This Strategic Plan is being developed in order to improve processes within/between State agencies; doing so will help improve watershed management services to local watershed stakeholders.

■ What the Plan Is/Is not

- This Strategic Plan is focused on improving internal State Agency processes and procedures, in order to improve data sharing, service delivery, and investment of State funds in local efforts. This Strategic Plan is not intended to dictate to local and federal stakeholders how they should work in local watersheds. Rather, it is designed to provide State Agency staff with a framework for working collaboratively with all stakeholders in the development of solutions that meet their needs. It is also designed to help facilitate the improvement of partnerships among State, local and federal stakeholders.

Definitions of Watershed and Watershed Management

■ Watershed

- A geographical area where water draining from the land (surface or subsurface) flows into a common waterbody.
- The watershed includes the land, the river or stream system, and the complete ecological setting including the interdependence of people, animals, plants and the natural elements particular to that geographic area.

■ Watershed Management

- Effective watershed management results in successful projects that yield positive outcomes for the State's watersheds.
- Watershed management is a process for making decisions about activities that will affect the health of a watershed.
- The process is characterized by considerations of how actions in one location in a watershed will affect conditions in other parts of the watershed or other watersheds. This process uses open and transparent decision-making involving collaborations among interested parties by:
 - reliance on scientific description of conditions in the watershed and the application of scientific methods to develop decision support information and tools;
 - and by a process of planning, implementation, assessment, and adaptive decision-making.
- The issues under consideration include ecological health (e.g., habitat, hydrologic function, and aquatic life), land use (e.g., commercial, industrial, agricultural, and residential uses), and resources use (e.g., recreation, water supply, water quality and flood control).

■ Statewide Watershed Management Components¹

- Delineation of a state into natural geographic (e.g., watershed/basin) management areas
- A series or sequence of management steps or phases to guide regulatory and non-regulatory actions within geographic areas (i.e., monitoring, assessment, planning, implementation)
- The integration of Clean Water Act and other water resource programs through the coordinated implementation of management steps and the formation of partnerships
- An established process for involving stakeholders through formal or ad hoc meetings, committees, and comment periods
- A focus on environmental results rather than only program measures

¹ EPA Office of Water Final Report: A Review of Statewide Watershed Management Approaches, April 2002.

Strategic Planning Process

■ Strategic Planning Methodology

- Definitions and Planning Roadmap - The methodology used to develop this strategic plan is outlined in Appendix C. Strategic Plan definitions are provided in the document as well as in Appendix C.
- Data Gathering - This strategic planning process relied heavily on the data gathered through interviews and surveys with local stakeholders during the development of the AB2117 report. In addition to this data, interviews were conducted with Agency leadership, department managers, state watershed management program staff, public officials, community leaders and representatives of watershed groups.
- Developing the Strategic Plan Elements - The Steering Committee has conducted six meetings during which it has prepared the draft Strategic Plan Elements found within this document. The Steering Committee has been supported with staff work prepared by the Strategic Planning Core Team (see Appendix B for list of members) which has met to develop and refine draft elements in preparation for each Steering Committee meeting.

■ Local Involvement

- The Steering Committee is requesting feedback from additional local watershed stakeholders to ensure the initial draft elements address local stakeholder concerns regarding the State's need to improve its service delivery and support for local efforts. The Steering Committee will use this feedback to revise the initial draft. This revised draft will be distributed again for feedback to a wider audience. The Steering Committee will determine how to incorporate this feedback into its final Strategic Plan document.
- The final Strategic Plan will be implemented with local stakeholders participating in the Governance process responsible for implementing the Strategic Plan, participating in the development of solutions as part of initiatives, and monitoring results associated with project implementation.

Key Strategic Issues

The following is a synthesis of the key strategic issues identified in the AB 2117 Report and during interviews with Agency leadership, managers, and watershed management staff. These key strategic issues have been grouped into the following categories:

- **Lack of Coordination Among Agencies** - Lack of coordination among State agencies has been caused by differing watershed management approaches, ineffective communication among agency staff, uncoordinated funding activities, lack of accountability, and unclear roles and responsibilities.
- **Incomplete Data** - Incomplete data has been caused by the lack of coordinated data, insufficient scientific tools, insufficient and untrained data collection resources, and conflicting data collection methods and tools.
- **Lack of Accountability (Clear Results)** - Lack of accountability has been caused by the inability to fulfill local watershed management plans, unclear local roles and responsibilities vs. those of the State, and insufficient tools to support assessment of and communication of results in local watersheds.
- **Insufficient Support for Local Agencies** - Insufficient support for local agencies has been caused by insufficient State technical assistance, complex grant funding processes and limited funding support for planning and organizational development activities, limited education and outreach, and weak coordination/partnership activities.

Cause and effect diagrams are provided in Appendix D that depict how these problems build upon each other, resulting in the overriding issues presented above.

Draft Mission and Vision

Our Purpose and What We Want to Achieve

- Our mission is:
 - To protect and improve California's watersheds by coordinating State resources and working collaboratively with all residents of the State.
- Our vision is to have:
 - Healthy watersheds that will enhance the State's natural resources and provide economic, social and environmental benefits for generations of Californians.

The following goals, objectives, strategies, and initiatives describe how we intend to address the key issues identified earlier so that we may fulfill our mission and achieve our vision.

Draft Goals

Desired End Results

- Goal 1: State Agency Coordination/Collaboration
 - Increase efficiency, eliminate redundancy, and reduce conflict among State agencies providing watershed management services
- Goal 2: Long-Term Outcomes
 - Demonstrate measurable improvement in watershed health
- Goal 3: Collective Investment
 - Increase program effectiveness and sustainability by leveraging State, federal and local resources
- Goal 4: Local Involvement
 - Increase local involvement in watershed issues and long-term public involvement in local watersheds (two-way exchange)

How We'll Achieve Our Goals - Supporting Draft Initiatives

- Goal 1: State Agency Coordination/Collaboration
 - 1) State Agency Watershed Management Governance Framework
 - 2) Program Service Delivery
- Goal 2: Long-Term Outcomes
 - 3) Data Collection and Management
 - 4) Assessment of Results
 - 5) Communicating Results
 - 6) Single Point of Entry to State Watershed Data and Services
- Goal 3: Collective Investment
 - 7) Funding
 - 8) Technical Assistance
 - 9) Investment in Science
- Goal 4: Local Involvement
 - 10) Education and Outreach
 - 11) Development and Implementation of Local Watershed Management Plans

Draft Goal 1: State Agency Coordination/Collaboration

Objectives, Strategies, and Initiatives

Goal: State Agency Coordination/Collaboration - Increase efficiency, eliminate redundancy, and reduce conflict among State agencies providing watershed management services.

Objectives (Measurable Targets, Specific Results to be Achieved)	Strategies (High Level Actions and Approaches)	Initiatives (Significant Long-Term Cross-Organizational Efforts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Generate a paradigm shift in the way Agencies approach watershed management (coordinated vs. unilateral approaches)<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure State decisions are based on up-to-date inter-agency data and sound science<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure State Agency watershed management decisions are made using information from existing inter/intra-Agency advisory bodies<input type="checkbox"/> Increase the consistency in how State Agencies approach watershed management<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure relevant State, federal and local stakeholders are involved early in the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate Agency watershed activities by participating with local interests to establish high level priorities for specific watersheds<input type="checkbox"/> Reorganize state activities according to watershed boundaries as appropriate (e.g., grant programs according to watershed boundaries - award grants according to watersheds)<input type="checkbox"/> Clearly and consistently communicate a unified message to all stakeholders<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledge the uniqueness of each watershed<input type="checkbox"/> Address inter/intra-Agency conflict before interacting with local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> State Agency Watershed Management Governance Framework - Create a forum(s) that provides leadership, provides a vehicle to share information, provides guidance to state departments' watershed direction, and monitors state watershed initiative results<input type="checkbox"/> Program Service Delivery - Determine whether Agency departments and programs are organized appropriately to deliver watershed programs effectively and efficiently. Address barriers that may be inhibiting our success.

Draft Goal 2: Long-Term Outcomes

Objectives, Strategies, and Initiatives

Goal: Long-Term Outcomes - Demonstrate measurable improvement in watershed health

Objectives (Measurable Targets, Specific Results to be Achieved)	Strategies (High Level Actions and Approaches)	Initiatives (Significant Long-Term Cross-Organizational Efforts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Define measurable success indicators that will demonstrate achievement of watershed goals<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure indicator data is collected by state agencies or local entities<input type="checkbox"/> Increase the accessibility of watershed data for state, federal and local stakeholders<input type="checkbox"/> Increase the consistency and breadth of data collected for each watershed<input type="checkbox"/> Provide stakeholders with demonstrable results of watershed efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure State agencies and federal and local stakeholders understand their respective roles and responsibilities<input type="checkbox"/> Increase support for mutual planning, assessment and project implementation<input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate sharing of best practices and successful models applied in local watersheds between state and local stakeholders<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a universal tracking and reporting system for watershed data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Data Collection and Management - Ensure processes and procedures are in place to facilitate the capture, analysis, control and storage of quality data (inform State government about the outcome of its actions and investments)<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment of Results - Ensure a process is in place that facilitates the assessment of data to support watershed management efforts<input type="checkbox"/> Communicating Results - Expand avenues and establish protocols for communicating results of watershed management efforts and the tools available to assess efforts.<input type="checkbox"/> Single Point of Entry to State Watershed Data and Services - Develop and promote a State watershed website that provides stakeholders with a single point of entry to available watershed data and services.

Draft Goal 3: Collective Investment

Objectives, Strategies, and Initiatives

Goal: Collective Investment - Increase program effectiveness and sustainability by leveraging State, federal and local resources.

Objectives (Measurable Targets, Specific Results to be Achieved)	Strategies (High Level Actions and Approaches)	Initiatives (Significant Long-Term Cross-Organizational Efforts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Increase the effectiveness of public and private partnerships in order to maximize resources that will provide on-the-ground improvements to watersheds<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure a collaborative process is in place to facilitate the leveraging of resources among Agencies and programs<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt watershed management as a part of doing business and encourage private sector partners to do the same<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure State funding addresses identified state, federal and local priorities that achieves the State's goals<input type="checkbox"/> Increase the long-term viability of local watershed partnerships<input type="checkbox"/> Increase the scientific knowledge and tools available to support watershed management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate and act on local expertise in State watershed programs<input type="checkbox"/> Leverage public and private resources<input type="checkbox"/> Seek out and promote participation of all critical stakeholders in local watershed partnerships<input type="checkbox"/> Work collaboratively to ensure watershed organizations have the tools needed to be successful (e.g., leveraged funding, technical support, etc.)<input type="checkbox"/> Provide staff and funding resources to support the development of effective partnerships<input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate the integration of watershed management in local land use planning efforts<input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate the integration of watershed management in State planning efforts<input type="checkbox"/> Promote administrative and legislative initiatives (e.g., incentives and taxes) that encourage watershed management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Technical Assistance - Ensure agencies have the capacity to provide technical assistance watershed partnerships are requesting. Make state technical assistance available to local partnerships.<input type="checkbox"/> Funding - Coordinate inter-agency and intra-agency funding activities so that the State can collaboratively and innovatively fund and encourage projects on a watershed scale<input type="checkbox"/> Investment in Science - Support and coordinate applied scientific and technical studies to improve understanding of watershed functions and restoration processes (e.g., hydrology and geology studies)

Draft Goal 4: Local Involvement

Objectives, Strategies, and Initiatives

Goal: Local Involvement - Increase local involvement in watershed issues and long-term public involvement in local watersheds (two-way exchange)

Objectives (Measurable Targets, Specific Results to be Achieved)	Strategies (High Level Actions and Approaches)	Initiatives (Significant Long-Term Cross-Organizational Efforts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Support local communities in their efforts to address watershed issues<input type="checkbox"/> Increase local watershed education and outreach activities<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure relevant State, federal and local stakeholders are involved early in the process<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate and act on local expertise in State programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Develop and implement statewide watershed public education and outreach campaigns throughout the State<input type="checkbox"/> Assist local watershed stakeholders in the development and implementation of local watershed management plans<input type="checkbox"/> Increase volunteer monitoring programs<input type="checkbox"/> Develop partnerships with local experts<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure stakeholders are informed of State Agencies' priorities (e.g., the State needs comprehensive, locally developed watershed management plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Education and Outreach - Develop a statewide watershed public education and outreach program that may be customized to meet local needs<input type="checkbox"/> Development and Implementation of Local Watershed Management Plans - Provide resources (staff, time, funding) for integrated multi-objective watershed management planning and project implementation

Strategic Plan Implementation

Introduction

■ Implementation Timeline

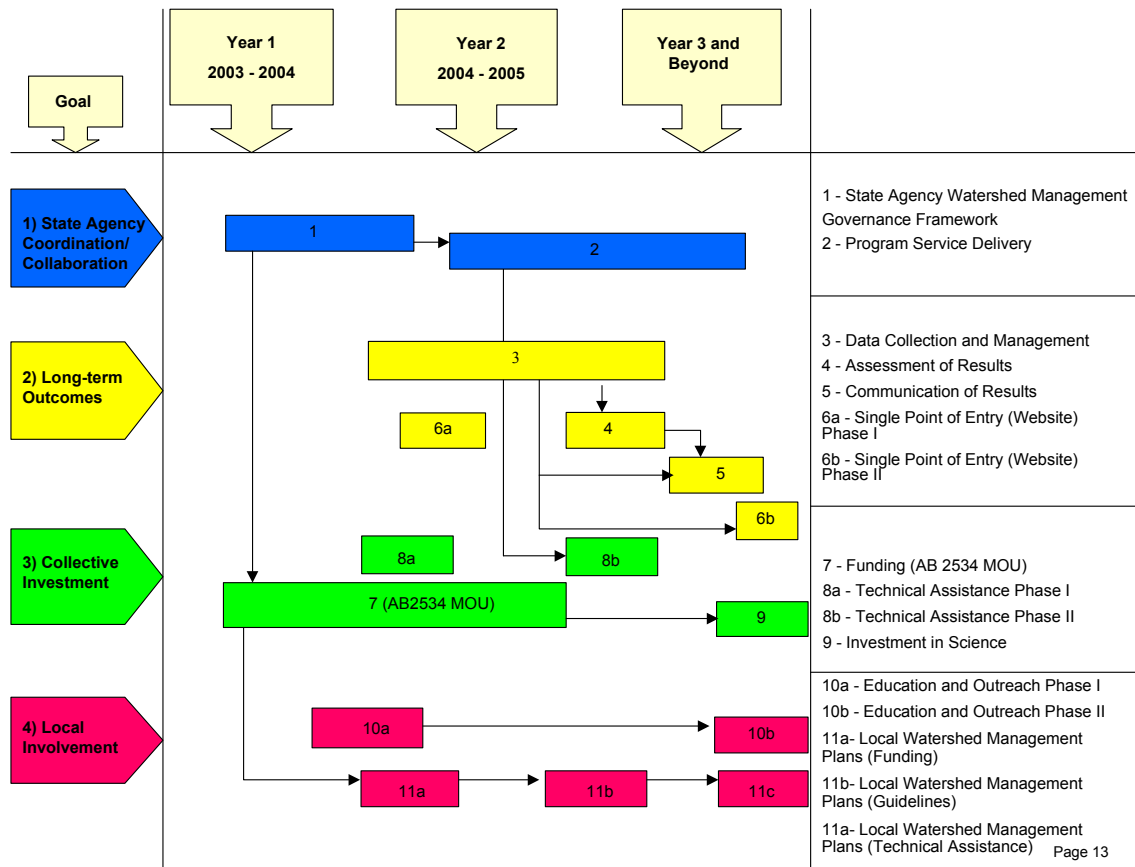
- The California Agency Watershed Management Strategic Plan will be implemented over a five year period. During this time, the strategic plan initiatives will be implemented based on resource availability. The initiative implementation path depicted on the following page presents a suggested timeline. Initiatives are represented according to goal. Dependencies between initiatives are represented with connecting lines. Some initiatives will be implemented in phases as represented in the implementation path.

■ Implementation Process

- Co-sponsors for each initiative will be identified and held accountable for bringing together a team of State, local and federal stakeholders responsible for implementing each initiative. Initiative teams will:
 - Develop a team charter
 - Identify and obtain resources needed to support initiative implementation
 - Refine initiative scope, objectives, and deliverables to reflect the changing needs and priorities of stakeholders
 - Achieve initiative objectives
 - Prepare initiative deliverables
 - Identify solutions, present recommendations, and report progress to the State Agency Watershed Council responsible for overseeing the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan

Draft WMSP Initiatives

Implementation Path



Appendices

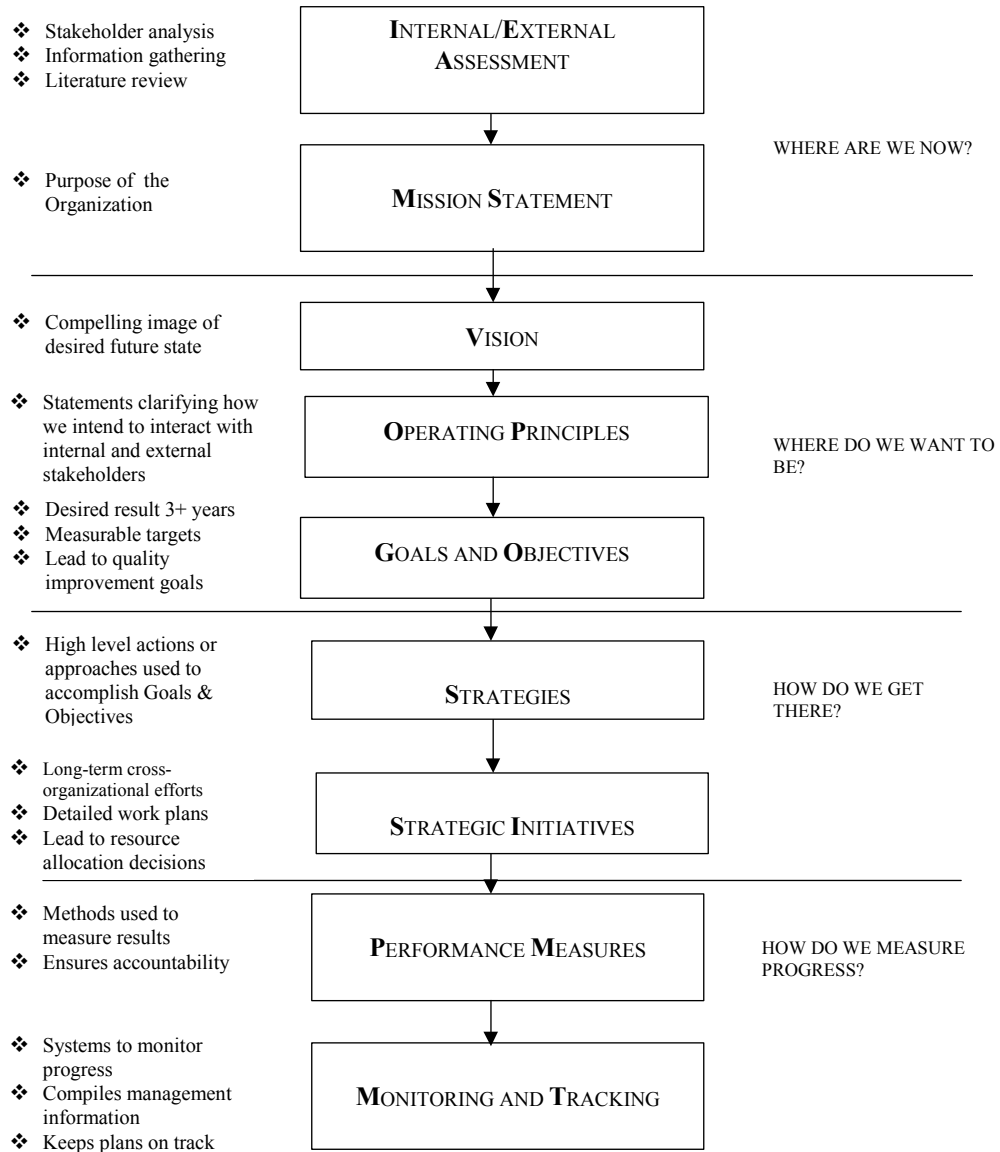
Appendix A: Steering Committee Members

- Cal/EPA
 - ❑ Loretta Barsamian, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 2
 - ❑ Tom Howard, State Water Resources Control Board
 - ❑ Beth Jines, Cal/EPA (Co-Chair)
 - ❑ Doug Okumura, Department of Pesticide Regulation
 - ❑ Ann Riley, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 2
 - ❑ Harold Singer, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 6
- Resources Agency
 - ❑ Bill Berry, Department of Parks and Recreation
 - ❑ Neil Fishman, Coastal Conservancy
 - ❑ Diana Jacobs, Department of Fish and Game
 - ❑ Ross Johnson, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
 - ❑ Patti Keating, California Conservation Corps
 - ❑ Jaime Kooser, California Coastal Commission
 - ❑ Georgia Liphardt, Wildlife Conservation Board
 - ❑ John Lowrie, CALFED
 - ❑ Jonas Minton, Department of Water Resources
 - ❑ Luree Stetson, Resources Agency (Co-Chair)

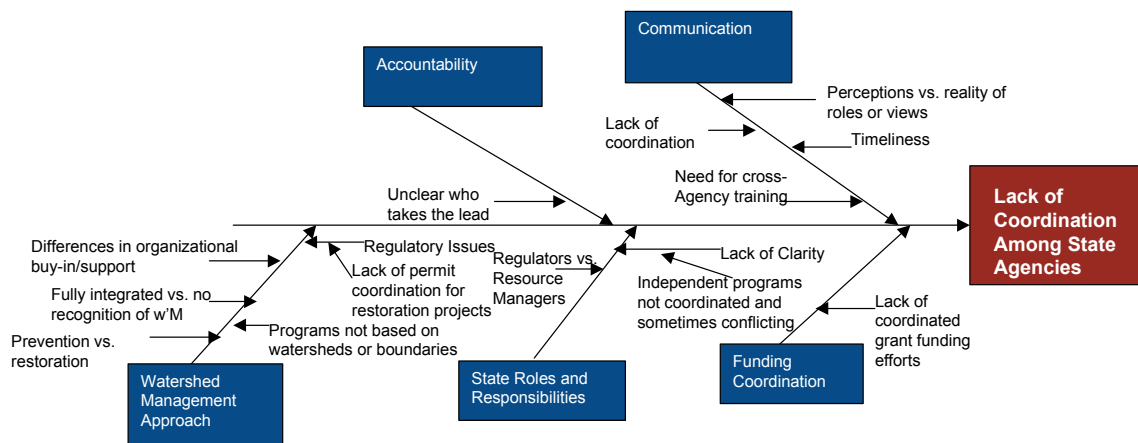
Appendix B: Project Core Team Members

- Cal/EPA
 - Meriah Arias, Cal/EPA
 - Ken Coulter, State Water Resources Control Board
 - Tom Howard, State Water Resources Control Board
 - Beth Jines, Cal/EPA (Co-Chair)
 - Margie Lopez Read, State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Quality
 - Jim Sutton, State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Rights
- Resources Agency
 - Renee Hoyos, Resources Agency
 - Stefan Lorenzato, Department of Water Resources
 - Luree Stetson, Resources Agency (Co-Chair)

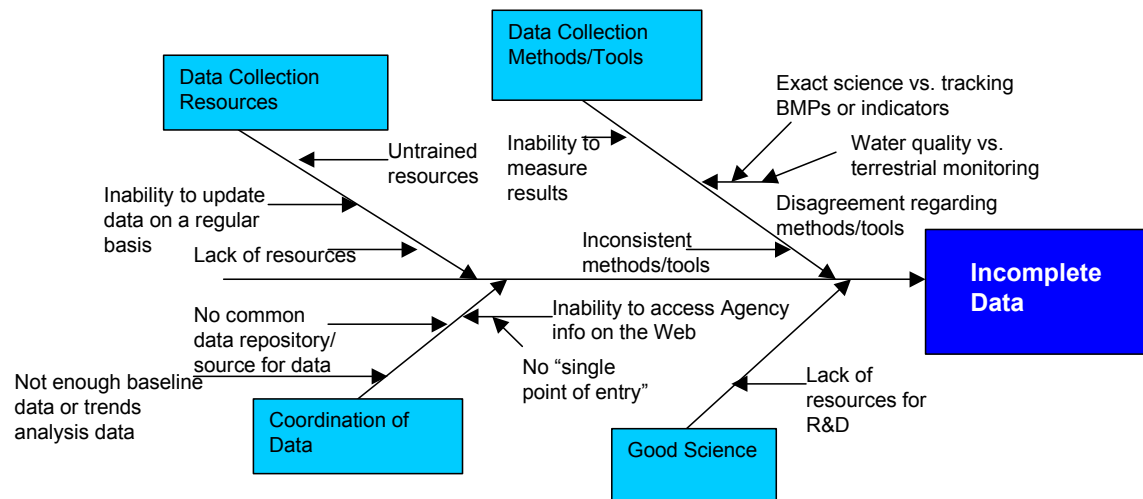
Appendix C: Strategic Planning Definitions and Roadmap



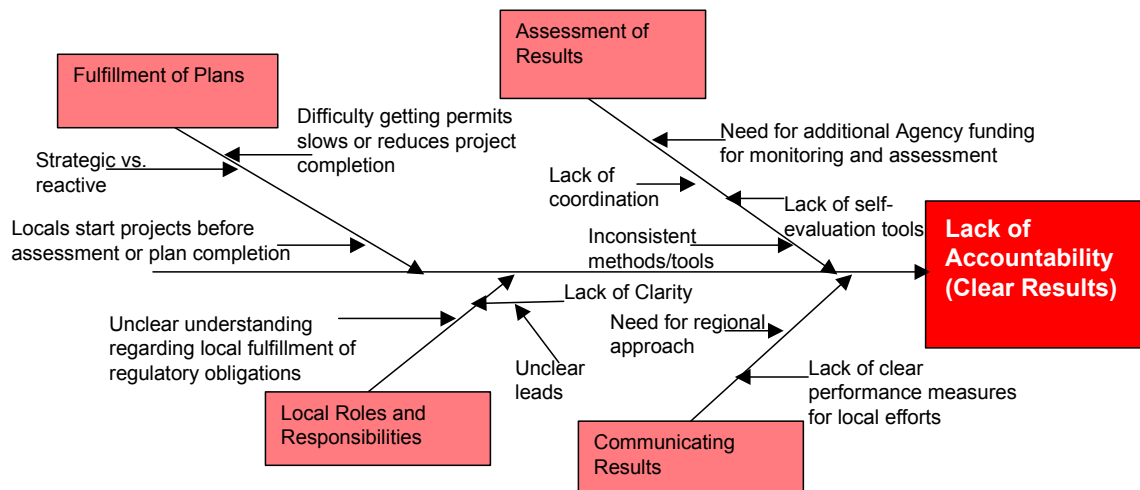
Appendix D: Key Strategic Issues Cause and Effect Diagrams



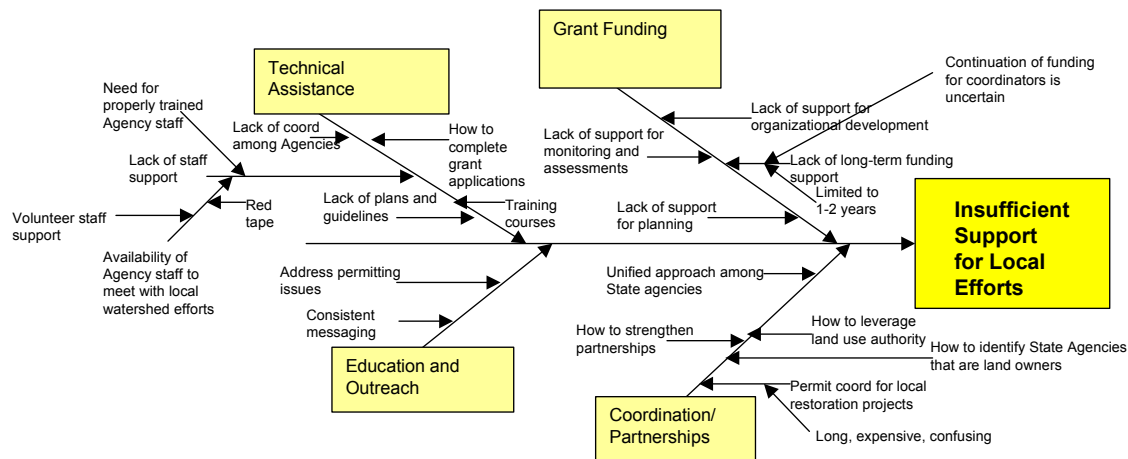
State Agencies are approaching watershed management activities differently. Some State organizations have different priorities for prevention vs. restoration activities. Some State organizations have fully incorporated watershed management approaches into their decision-making processes and programs while others are not clear as to how to adopt a watershed management framework within their program areas. Inside State Agencies, there is inconsistent leadership commitment related to watershed management (e.g., leadership can be committed at the Director Level and then be skipped at the Management Level). For most State organizations, programs are not organized based on watersheds or their boundaries. Regulatory issues are also a source of frustration as uncoordinated permit processes can conflict with each other and/or significantly delay water restoration activities. The roles of State regulators and resource managers can also conflict with each other. It is often unclear what State organization should take the lead in addressing issues or problems in partnership with local and federal stakeholders. Independent programs are not coordinated with each other. State agencies are not effectively coordinating grant funding efforts. Finally, communications between/among State Agencies is not timely and is uncoordinated. Perceptions of the roles or views of State Agencies do not in many cases reflect reality, making it even more difficult for staff to work more effectively together.



While a significant amount of data is being collected for watersheds, it is being kept in numerous locations, making it difficult for Agency staff and local and federal stakeholders to access. State Agency staff and local stakeholders would like a single point of entry where they can access data. In addition, State Agency staff and local stakeholders do not believe that there is enough baseline data or trend analysis data to effectively support watershed management activities. Additional data collection resources are also needed. At this time, data is not updated on a regular basis. There are also concerns that some data collection resources are not properly trained. With the proper training, these resources could collect data more effectively. Data collection issues are also caused by disagreements regarding data collection methods/tools. In addition, some State Agency staff believe that exact science must always be used to determine watershed health, while others believe tracking of best management practices (BMPs) or other indicators should also be used. Finally, there is a need to continue investing resources in scientific studies that will help generate new tools and approaches for watershed management and monitoring of watershed health. Given all these issues, State Agency staff and local stakeholders are not able to effectively measure the results of their efforts in local watersheds.



Lack of accountability (clear results) is an issue that has been caused by several factors including unclear local roles and responsibilities vs. those of State agencies, challenges related to fulfillment of local watershed plans, and difficulty assessing and communicating results in local watersheds. Local stakeholders need assistance from the State in understanding their regulatory obligations. They also need clarification on who at the State is taking lead roles related to watershed management activities. Fulfillment of local watershed plans is challenging as a result of the difficulty in obtaining permits for desired activities. This difficulty translates into lost time and reduction in project completion rates. Local projects are often initiated before adequate assessments or planning can be completed. In some cases, these projects are not as effective as a result. State Agency staff interviewed expressed frustration with spending the majority of their time reacting to watershed management issues rather than strategically addressing them. They would like to be more proactive than reactive and partner more closely with local watershed management stakeholders in these proactive efforts. Assessment of watershed results is challenging as a result of the lack of coordinated assessment efforts, needed but undeveloped assessment tools, and the need for additional Agency funding for monitoring, assessment and adaptive management. Local stakeholders would like more self-evaluation tools that can help them assess their results and communicate performance results. Communicating results could be improved if the State and local stakeholders assist each other in developing clear performance measures for local efforts. Stakeholders would also like to take a regional approach to communicating results, linking best practices and successes across local watersheds.



Local stakeholders have identified several areas the State can focus on in order to improve support for local watershed efforts. Coordination/partnerships are currently hampered by a lack of a unified approach among State Agencies. Local stakeholders need more information on how they can strengthen existing partnerships. Local stakeholders would also like improved permit coordination for local restoration projects. Existing permitting processes are long, expensive, and confusing. State Agency staff would like to leverage local land use authority in order to improve watershed health. Local stakeholders and agency staff would like an easy way to identify State Agencies that are land owners so that they can work more effectively together. Existing education and outreach activities could be improved by developing and applying consistent messaging. Grant funding is another area of concern for local stakeholders. They would like more funding for organizational development, planning, and monitoring and assessments. They also need timely and predictable grant contracting processes. Existing funding is limited to 1-2 year cycles. Local stakeholders would like longer-term support, giving them the opportunity to implement plans and demonstrate long-term successes. Local stakeholders would also like improved technical assistance from State Agencies. Training is needed in scientific areas, planning, and how to complete grant applications. At this time technical assistance is not coordinated among State Agencies. State staff availability is also unpredictable, since many volunteer their time. Unfortunately, some State staff are not properly trained to meet the needs of local stakeholders. Insufficient support for local efforts makes it more challenging for local stakeholders to make significant on the ground improvements in watershed health.

Appendix E: Draft Initiatives

The following pages contain detailed descriptions of each draft strategic initiative, including:

- Goal being addressed
- Initiative title
- Scope briefly describing what this initiative will cover
- Project objectives describing what the initiative implementation team should achieve
- Deliverables the initiative implementation team should produce

Once these elements have been finalized, resources necessary to support each initiative will be identified, including:

- Co-coordinators responsible for assembling the initiative team members and reporting on initiative progress
- State, local, federal, and NGO stakeholders who should participate as members of the initiative team and/or asked for input and feedback on recommendations being made by the team
- Staff and funding support necessary to implement initiative activities

Goal 1: Increase efficiency, eliminate redundancy, and reduce conflict among State agencies providing watershed management services

Draft Initiative #1

■ **Title:** State Agency Watershed Management Governance Framework

■ **Scope:** Create a forum(s) that provides leadership, provides a vehicle to share information, provides guidance to state departments' watershed direction, and monitors state watershed initiative results

■ **Project Objectives:**

- Build the decision-making framework around existing watershed management coordination teams
- Agree on a common set of topographic watershed boundaries all Agencies can use
- Work jointly with Agencies and with local stakeholders to develop watershed planning unit boundaries that meet local and State needs
- Incorporate watershed management approaches in State agency planning, prioritization and implementation efforts
- Use watershed management principles developed with input from the local stakeholders to help guide State agency decision-making
- Improve coordination and implementation among State program watershed management elements including: regulation, land acquisition, project implementation, education and outreach, data
- Define criteria by which program priorities will be established
- Identify shared Agency priorities for selected watersheds (e.g., land acquisition, projects, etc.) (help us get the biggest bang for the buck)

■ **Deliverables:**

- Evaluation of existing watershed governance structures and forums
- Framework supported by staff resources that: a) helps inform and assist/influence State Department decision-making and facilitates conflict resolution; b) helps track State department performance related to watershed work to influence continuous improvement and adaptive management; c) provides a venue through which the State expresses its interests; d) facilitates the evaluation of on the ground monitoring results and determines whether what we think is happening is in fact happening in watersheds ; and e) clearly defines where public input fits into the framework (e.g., as equals at the table or as advisors)
- Forum, that encourages broad participation, in which an overview occurs across programs, departments, agencies (e.g., Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee - 28 organizations working together on Non-point Source (NPS) and Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project)
- MOUs that provide guidelines and agreements on how we proceed - expresses philosophy of the State

Goal 1: Increase efficiency, eliminate redundancy, and reduce conflict among State agencies providing watershed management services

Draft Initiative #2

■ Title: Program Service Delivery

- Scope:** Determine whether Agency departments and programs are organized appropriately to deliver watershed programs effectively and efficiently. Address barriers that may be inhibiting our success.

■ Project Objectives:

- ☐ Share best practices and lessons learned
- ☐ Implement processes that ensure staff work more collaboratively and improve working relationships across Agencies
- ☐ Consistently implement the distinct roles and responsibilities for State Agencies within each watershed (e.g., through MOUs and program workplans)
- ☐ Educate Agency staff about: 1) the benefits of using a watershed approach and 2) the interests and responsibilities of other State Agencies
- ☐ Support adaptive management
- ☐ Provide easy public access to watershed programs in the various departments (e.g., single point of entry into the network of watershed programs)
- ☐ Proactively coordinate State regulatory processes (e.g., TMDLs) and schedules in watersheds where local voluntary partnerships are underway (AB2117 Rec #12)
- ☐ Improve coordination of the State's permitting processes to facilitate timely approval of watershed restoration projects
- ☐ Further coordinate delivery of State watershed programs to accomplish goals specified in the AB 2117 report (AB 2117 Rec #16)

■ Deliverables:

- ☐ Report addressing what specifically needs improvement and recommendations for improvement related to: a) Processes inside and across organizations where functions and services are performed and b) how funding of Agencies and their programs impacts watershed approaches
 - Include recommendations from stakeholders on how we can fix things
- ☐ Pilot projects including potentially the following:
 - Assign regional watershed coordinators with multi-agency team management authority and responsibility who will be responsible for facilitating and coordinating State activities at the local level
 - Establish regional teams and/or co-locate staff at the regional level to leverage resources and facilitate planning and communication efforts
 - Develop networks that provide opportunities for increased interagency cooperation
- ☐ Conflict resolution process to address issues between/among agencies working in a watershed
- ☐ Streamlined permit process

Goal 2: Demonstrate measurable improvement in watershed health

Draft Initiative #3

■ **Title:** Data Collection and Management

■ **Scope:** Ensure processes and procedures are in place to facilitate the capture, analysis, control and storage of quality data (inform State government about the outcome of its actions and investments)

■ **Project Objectives:**

- ❑ Develop common collection requirements and minimum reporting needs
- ❑ Ensure multiple parties collect data in a manner that meets agreed upon quality and compatibility standards
- ❑ Collectively decide on relevant data to gather, taking into account how we can present data in a way people can use it
- ❑ Increase the trust in data collection by local stakeholders, demonstrated by increased use of local data by State Agencies
- ❑ Increase the trust in data collection cross-Agency, demonstrated by increased use of cross-Agency data by Agencies
- ❑ Incorporate locally collected data into State data collection systems (this will be a difficult objective to meet however, it is important to our success - we have to recognize and address the issues)
 - Look at the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) for the Bay Delta
- ❑ Ensure data can be shared amongst compatible systems
- ❑ Clarify roles and responsibilities related to data collection
- ❑ Coordinate with existing state and federal standards and tool sets
- ❑ Ensure data collection efforts are commensurate with project scale and resource availability (e.g., small creek vs. Bay Delta)

■ **Deliverables:**

- ❑ Cross-Agency written data collection quality compatibility standards
- ❑ Communication plan for compatibility standards (i.e., Establish the communication plan that provides the continuous feedback and sharing of conditions)
- ❑ Recommendation regarding the validity of having government collecting data
- ❑ Process for measuring use and application of standards
- ❑ Confirmation that individual state programs have the authority to provide funds for adaptive management and monitoring
- ❑ Statewide data architecture for the State's watershed programs
- ❑ Common statewide standards and tools for data collection that can be customized to local watershed needs
- ❑ Data collection and reporting component in all State grants supporting project implementation
- ❑ Data source/repositories that are available to those analyzing results, including data on success of grant programs, watershed programs, watershed indicators, and GIS

Goal 2: Demonstrate measurable improvement in watershed health

Draft Initiative #4

■ **Title:** Assessment of Results

■ **Scope:** Ensure a process is in place that facilitates the assessment of data to support watershed management efforts

■ **Project Objectives:**

- Generate more buy-in on the use of Environmental Indicators (e.g., EPIC)
- Determine whether data is being collected in enough places that allows us to assess results
- Given limited resources, identify the priorities for data collection that allow us to determine the health of watersheds
- Determine how we can effectively use the data we have
- Obtain agreement on what we are all (collectively) trying to assess
- Determine whether there is a scientific approach that can improve assessment
- Agree on common watershed health and scientific metrics for the State's watersheds

■ **Deliverables:**

- Methodology for integrating the variety of measures used to assess watersheds
- Report summarizing where data is collected and assessing whether it allows us to assess results
 - Do we have the data we need to tell us what our problems/issues are?
- Assessment of data collection resources and recommendations for addressing gaps
- Recommendations regarding appropriate measures that can be used to assess individual watersheds and supports an adaptive management approach, including the qualitative measures
- Required reporting on the status of watersheds
- Defined roles and responsibilities among state, federal, and local stakeholders related to data analysis
- Agreement regarding benchmarks that can be used to assess intermediate progress
- Reporting process for the State on the health of watersheds
- Critical indicators that locals can use to evaluate the health of their watershed

Goal 2: Demonstrate measurable improvement in watershed health

Draft Initiative #5

■ **Title:** Communicating Results

■ **Scope:** Expand avenues and establish protocols for communicating results of watershed management efforts and the tools available to assess efforts.

■ **Project Objectives:**

- Improve communication among those managing watersheds (e.g., acquisition, restoration, enhancement of watershed resources) regarding successes and failures
- Assess communication forums used to date
- Determine how we can present data in a way people can use it
- Understand target audiences

■ **Deliverables:**

- Assessment of communication forums used to date
- Process to assess how we are communicating
- Develop communication system that is supportive of adaptive management
- Develop mechanisms to receive feedback on assessments that support adaptive management
 - Build into normal course of business
- Develop regional reports on the status of management in watersheds
 - Agree on a consistent definition for regions
- Examples of good visuals and clear messages that are appropriate for a wide variety of audiences and communicate results clearly
- Mechanisms and processes for communicating results (e.g., media, college campus programs, Web links with local sites, watershed network, business associations, Agriculture Commission, Farm Bureau)
- Forums for reporting to/communicating with stakeholders
 - Document results of collective efforts
 - Share effective/proven practices
 - Address failures
 - Identify new solutions

Goal 2: Demonstrate measurable improvement in watershed health

Draft Initiative #6

- **Title:** Single Point of Entry to State Watershed Data and Services
- **Scope:** Develop and promote a State watershed website that provides stakeholders with a single point of entry to available watershed data and services.
- **Project Objectives:**
 - Assess existing websites and data repository systems
 - Designate/revamp a website to assist both agency staff and the public
 - Provide stakeholders with easy access to current and consistent watershed indicators (or metrics) and trend data
 - Provide access to related watershed websites (other states, federal, local)
 - Reduce the amount of time needed to respond to data requests
 - Increase access to services (grant applications, permits, etc.)
- **Deliverables:**
 - Strategy supporting deployment of State Agency information and services over the Internet
 - Website security strategy and specifications
 - Website implementation plan
 - Designated resources to support the website (e.g., funding, facilities, infrastructure, and support staff)
 - Website deployment phase I - information posted on a website with links to other websites
 - Website deployment phase II - ability to deposit data or obtain data from databases, obtain and submit permit applications, obtain and submit grant applications using the website

Goal 3: Increase program effectiveness and sustainability by leveraging State, federal and local resources

Initiative #7

■ **Title:** Funding

- **Scope:** Coordinate inter-agency and intra-agency funding activities so that the State can fund and encourage projects on a watershed scale (State is asking its Agencies to have collaborative interactive funding processes)

■ **Project Objectives:**

- Ensure we do not reduce flexibility to allocate funding (e.g., be careful about funding according to watershed boundaries)
- Ensure the greatest impact on watershed improvement through consolidated joint funding efforts
 - Provide funding of local watershed partnerships for a sufficient period of time to accomplish results
 - Ensure collective funding efforts of local watershed partnerships generate successful local projects
- Reduce the confusion posed by the multitude of grant processes
- Correct fragmentation of State funding programs by coordinating across Agencies to set regional priorities and develop user friendly grant administration
- Integrate diverse interests in the grant application process
- Decrease the complexity of State grant applications and contracts and simplify across State agencies the ability to apply for and receive grant funding
- Eliminate unnecessary time delays due to process
- Ensure State grant funding supports planning, organizational development, monitoring activities, and the hiring of technical assistance
- Provide long-term State funding to ensure the viability of individual local projects
- Encourage the leveraging of diverse funding sources (i.e., federal, local, private)
- Ensure state prioritizes distribution of grant funds to projects that are derived from local watershed entities and their plans

■ **Project Objectives (cont.)**

- Ensure the State has an incentive based funding program for developing and sustaining watershed councils
- Emphasize regional level prioritization and administration of State funding programs

■ **Deliverables:**

- Accountability measures for recipients of current or future State funding for local watershed efforts (AB 2117 Rec 18)
- Funding awarded to to voluntary watershed restoration and enhancement projects that use available principles, guidelines or watershed assessments developed by the State where these are available (AB 2117 Rec 19)
- An interagency grant review process and supporting infrastructure
- Streamlined grant contracting process
- Increased amount of State grant funding devoted to planning and organizational development activities (AB 2117 Rec #15)
- Increased amount of State grant funding devoted to monitoring (AB 2117 Rec 15)
- Regional-level workshops on available watershed management grant programs for potential grant applications that are tailored to each region (AB 2117 Rec 11)

Goal 3: Increase program effectiveness and sustainability by leveraging State, federal and local resources

Draft Initiative #8

■ **Title:** Technical Assistance

- **Scope:** Ensure agencies have the capacity to provide technical assistance (facilitation, project management, organizational development, networking, planning, restoration methods, consulting in science and engineering, regulatory assistance) Watershed Partnerships are requesting.

■ **Project Objectives:**

- Ensure a mechanism is in place to capture and process requests for technical assistance
- Develop interagency teams that work on technical assistance together to collaborate with watershed partnerships
- Recognize staff for pursuing innovative approaches in collaboration with watershed partnerships (AB 2117 Rec 6 revised)
- Provide State staff with the training they need to effectively support local efforts (e.g., facilitation, project management, organizational development, conflict resolution)
- Create and support regional or sub-regional forums for multiple watershed efforts, or large scale basin efforts, in order to effectively communicate and encourage larger scale planning
- Provide State staff with the time they need to participate in local activities
- Maintain a common set of guidance documents that help communicate State accepted approaches and techniques for watershed assessment, planning, and monitoring activities (AB 2117 Rec 6 revised)

■ **Deliverables:**

- Job descriptions that incorporate working with local watershed partnerships
- Recognition and reward system for staff
- Provide a regional coordinator who acts as the formal link between local efforts and State staff as well as provide local efforts with a regional and statewide perspective
- Training plan for staff working to support local efforts
- Provide local stakeholders with training they need to be successful
 - Establish or co-sponsor core training courses for watershed partnerships in which department personnel and/or non-governmental organizations provide instruction in: a) organizational development, strategic planning membership development and involvement; b) watershed planning and assessment; and c) ecological restoration design, construction methods and monitoring (AB 2117 Rec 10)

Goal 3: Increase program effectiveness and sustainability by leveraging State, federal and local resources

Draft Initiative #9

■ **Title:** Investment in Science

■ **Scope:** Support and coordinate applied scientific and technical studies to improve understanding of watershed functions and restoration processes (e.g., hydrology and geology studies) (AB 2117 Rec #16b)

■ **Project Objectives:**

- Ensure private sector supports these efforts
- Focus on watersheds that are lacking in data
- Ensure agencies publish the status and outcomes of their applied work
- Partner with universities and private foundations to obtain more applied research grants (thus increasing the amount of applied research conducted)
- Ensure staff are aware of existing studies and future research agenda
- Organize watershed restoration practitioner community to facilitate exchange of information on scientific and restoration methods

■ **Deliverables:**

- Increased research funding for universities
- Additional data and tools that support adaptive watershed management
- Increased support from students and professors to conduct research
- Science advisory body responsible for developing a common research agenda and coordinating research projects across agencies
- Continuing education forums

Goal 4: Increase local involvement in watershed issues and long-term public involvement in local watersheds (two-way exchange)

Draft Initiative #10

■ **Title:** Education and Outreach

■ **Scope:** Develop a statewide watershed public education and outreach program that may be customized to meet local needs

■ **Project Objectives:**

- Coordinate existing public education and outreach program activities
- Incorporate media channels in distribution of information to the public
- Develop a relationship with the business community
 - Focus attention on development of education and outreach tools similar to the Chesapeake Bay program (media)
- Share technical expertise across public and private watershed practitioners
- Involve local watershed stakeholders in government decision-making that affects their watershed (e.g., setting priorities, distributing grants, program development, etc.)

■ **Deliverables:**

- Forums and opportunities for local stakeholders to communicate and educate government officials and staff
 - Workshops on watershed management and restoration for public and private
- Compendium of curricula on watershed management (set of lesson plans for a subject area)
- Public forums on watershed management (e.g., Blue Circles)
- Innovative outreach and education pilot programs (e.g., Chesapeake Bay Watershed Watch - i.e., use of media)

Goal 4: Increase local involvement in watershed issues and long-term public involvement in local watersheds (two-way exchange)

Draft Initiative #11

■ **Title:** Development and Implementation of Local Watershed Management Plans

■ **Scope:** Provide resources (staff, time, funding) for integrated multi-objective watershed management planning and project implementation

■ **Project Objectives:**

- Encourage the development of a quality plan in each watershed (plans should be multi-objective and include land use, habitat protection, water quality, etc.)
- Provide staff support and grant funding to help facilitate assessment and planning efforts
- Work with local decision-makers to implement watershed plans and priorities
- Increase reliance on watershed plans for implementation of projects

■ **Deliverables:**

- A set of common elements for watershed management plans
- A process for evaluating contents of plans and supporting development of plans
 - A state taskforce of watershed partnerships and agencies to drive the planning
- State coordinated funding allocated to support local watershed planning projects
- State coordinated technical assistance to support local watershed planning projects and implementation of plans

Appendix F: Draft Operating Principles—How State Agencies Will Work Together and with Stakeholders

The Watershed Management Strategic Plan is founded on principles that support a strong relationship among State agencies and between the State and local watershed stakeholders. Our principles define how we will strive to do business differently as we interact with stakeholders and make decisions in the future. We recognize that these operating principles may not reflect how we conduct ourselves today; however, we are committed to implementing them. We will use these principles as a guide, test them over time, and update them as appropriate in order to improve our effectiveness in watershed protection and improvement.

- We will develop and implement a unified approach for State agency involvement in watershed management in California.
- We will communicate the State's interests and work with local communities to develop and promote a unified vision for watersheds.
- We will clearly articulate the State's high level goals and objectives for watersheds.
- We will develop and implement State policies, approaches, and programs using watershed boundaries.
- We will support both watershed preservation and restoration activities.
- We will support and participate in collaborative efforts between State and local interests to develop innovative solutions for local watersheds.
- We will coordinate the State's watershed approach with natural resource management.
- We will initiate more integration and flexibility across and within departments and with local watershed groups in order to achieve our vision.
- We will support the development of organizational capacity and long-term viability for local watershed groups.
- We will track and report on the achievement of the State's high level watershed management goals and objectives with local input.
- We will encourage the use of a consistent set of environmental indicators that are developed with stakeholder input to report results in local watersheds.